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STAT

BOOK ABOUT LIBERAL ACTIVIST AROUSES DISPUTE
BY JERRY SCHWARTZ

NEW YORK (AP) - FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF THE LATE ALLARD K. LOWENSTEIN ARE MOUNTING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST A NEW BOOK THAT ALLEGES THE LIBERAL ACTIVIST WAS A CIA AGENT AND AN INFORMER AGAINST COMMUNISTS IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

"THE PIED PIPER: ALLARD K. LOWENSTEIN AND THE LIBERAL DREAM" IS TO BE PUBLISHED MONDAY BY GROVE PRESS. IN IT, AUTHOR RICHARD CUMMINGS ARGUES THAT LOWENSTEIN, A ONE-TERM U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, WORKED FOR THE CIA IN AFRICA AND SPAIN.

BUT LOWENSTEIN'S SUPPORTERS CLAIM THE CUMMINGS BOOK IS INACCURATE; THAT HE IGNORED THE FACTS AND RELIED ON INNUENDO. THEY HAVE COMPILED ALMOST 200 PAGES OF AFFIDAVITS, LETTERS AND RESEARCH TO COUNTER CUMMINGS' 569-PAGE BOOK.

WORKING FOR THE CIA "IS NOT THE KIND OF THING HE'D HAVE DONE. AND THOSE OF US WHO KNEW HIS CHARACTER, AND I WAS ONE OF THEM, WOULD FEEL SAFE IN SAYING THAT THE VERY IDEA IS PREPOSTEROUS," WROTE CONSERVATIVE AUTHOR WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR., A FRIEND OF LOWENSTEIN'S AND A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF THE CIA.

"BASED ON REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO ME, I CAN SAY THAT MR. LOWENSTEIN WAS NEVER AN AGENT OF THE CIA," WROTE REP. LEE H. HAMILTON, D-IND., A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE.

LOWENSTEIN, WHO WAS ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1968, WAS SHOT TO DEATH IN HIS NEW YORK CITY LAW OFFICES BY A FORMER PROTEGE IN 1980. AN ACTIVIST IN LIBERAL AND STUDENT POLITICS, HE IS CREDITED WITH ENGINEERING THE "DUMP JOHNSON" MOVEMENT THAT HELPED LEAD TO THE DECISION OF PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON NOT TO RUN FOR RE-ELECTION.

CUMMINGS, A 47-YEAR-OLD LAWYER, SAID HE MET LOWENSTEIN IN THE EARLY 1970S WHEN BOTH WERE INVOLVED IN LONG ISLAND POLITICS. HE SAID HE DECIDED WITHIN DAYS OF THE SHOOTING TO WRITE A BOOK ABOUT LOWENSTEIN.

HE SAID HIS FIRST DRAFT DISCOUNTED REPORTS OF ANY CIA CONNECTION. THEN A "PROMINENT PERSON IN NEW YORK PUBLISHING" PUT HIM IN TOUCH WITH SOMEONE IN U.S. ARMY INTELLIGENCE, WHO TOLD HIM THAT LOWENSTEIN HAD INDEED WORKED FOR THE CIA FROM 1962 TO 1967. HE DOES NOT IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OR EXPLAIN HOW THE SOURCE KNEW ABOUT LOWENSTEIN'S ACTIVITIES.

HE BUTTRESSES THE SOURCE'S ASSERTION WITH INTERPRETATIONS OF ENTRIES IN LOWENSTEIN'S DIARIES; WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE LOWENSTEIN GOT THE MONEY FOR HIS EXTENSIVE TRAVELS; WITH INFORMATION FROM LOWENSTEIN'S DRAFT RECORDS.

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CUMMINGS CLAIMS THERE WAS A "GOOD WING" OF THE CIA THAT BELIEVED THE WAY TO FIGHT COMMUNISM OVERSEAS WAS BY SUPPORTING LIBERAL NON-COMMUNIST GROUPS AGAINST RIGHT-WING REGIMES. LOWENSTEIN, OSTENSIBLY AN AGENT OF THAT WING, WORKED AGAINST DICTATOR FRANCISCO FRANCO IN SPAIN AND APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA.

"THERE IS, I THINK, AN OVERWHELMING BODY OF EVIDENCE . . .," CUMMINGS SAID IN AN INTERVIEW. "YOU ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS ONLY A LIBERAL ACTING ON BEHALF OF UNNAMED LIBERAL GROUPS; OR IS THIS GUY GETTING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OR IS HE WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN SOME WAY?"

CUMMINGS ALSO SAYS LOWENSTEIN CARRIED HIS FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNISM INTO MISSISSIPPI AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. HE INTERPRETS A SINGLE, CRYPTIC ENTRY IN LOWENSTEIN'S DIARY TO MEAN THAT LOWENSTEIN WAS INFORMING ON COMMUNISTS IN THE MOVEMENT, THOUGH HE DOES NOT SAY WHAT NAMES WERE REVEALED TO WHOM.

THE PUBLICATION OF AN EXCERPT FROM CUMMINGS' BOOK GALVANIZED LOWENSTEIN'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY. THOUGH FIVE YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE LOWENSTEIN'S DEATH, THEY GUARD HIS REPUTATION FIERCELY.

IN 1980, WHEN THE VILLAGE VOICE, IN A PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING ARTICLE, DEALT WITH ALLEGATIONS THAT LOWENSTEIN WAS A HOMOSEXUAL - ALLEGATIONS THAT CUMMINGS ALSO ADDRESSES - LOWENSTEIN'S SUPPORTERS WENT TO THE NOW-DEFUNCT NATIONAL NEWS COUNCIL AND OBTAINED A RULING CRITICAL OF THE VOICE.

ALERTED BY THE PUBLICATION OF CUMMINGS' EXCERPT, LOWENSTEIN ASSOCIATES RONALD J. TABAK AND GARY BELLOW WENT TO WORK.

THEY SENT A STEADY STREAM OF MATERIAL TO MARTIN GARBUS, LAWYER FOR GROVE PRESS; AFFIDAVITS FROM PEOPLE CUMMINGS INTERVIEWED, CLAIMING THE AUTHOR IGNORED INFORMATION THAT DISPROVED HIS ARGUMENTS; DENIALS THAT LOWENSTEIN WAS A CIA AGENT; ACCUSATIONS THAT CUMMINGS USED LOWENSTEIN PAPERS WITHOUT PERMISSION.

TABAK SAID THE BOOK IS "HOPELESSLY ERRONEOUS," AND WOULD ONLY BE ACCEPTABLE IF IT WERE TO UNDERGO "DRASTIC EDITING." HE IS THREATENING TO SUE, CHARGING ANY DAMAGE TO LOWENSTEIN'S REPUTATION HURTS THE FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES OF THE ALLARD K. LOWENSTEIN FUND, WHICH CARRIES ON HIS WORK.

LOWENSTEIN'S SUPPORTERS "ARE OUTRAGED, AND NOT JUST FOR MR. LOWENSTEIN'S SAKE. THEY ARE AFRAID THAT THE MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE INSPIRED BY AL LOWENSTEIN TO DO GOOD WORKS WILL FEEL THAT THEY WERE DEFRAUDED BY HIM," TABAK SAID.

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GARBUS REPLIED THAT GROVE PRESS CONTINUES TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN CUMMINGS - "ALL GROVE PRESS CAN SAY IS THAT THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBLE AUTHOR WHO MAKES ACCUSATIONS." HE SAID HE HAS HEARD PORTIONS OF TAPED INTERVIEWS USED IN THE BOOK; AND HE FEELS THEY ARE PROPERLY REPRESENTED.

GARBUS SAID A MEMO FROM LOWENSTEIN'S CIA FILE - OBTAINED SINCE THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN; AND DISMISSED AS IRRELEVANT BY TABAK - CONFIRMS CUMMINGS' THESIS. IN IT, LOWENSTEIN IS SAID TO HAVE STATED HE HAD WORKED FOR THE CIA.

GARBUS SAID POSITIVE PROOF OF CIA INVOLVEMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COME BY. "THE CIA DOES NOT HAVE A BIG SIGN THAT SAYS, 'HEY, I'M A MEMBER OF THE CIA.'"

GARBUS SAID HE FEELS THE THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE BOOK INDICATES "THE KEEPER OF THE FLAME IS TURNING OUT TO BE MORE VIRTUOUS THAN THE FLAME ITSELF."

"AL LOWENSTEIN WAS A PRACTICAL POLITICIAN," GARBUS SAID. "IF A BOOK LIKE THIS HAD COME OUT WHILE HE WAS ALIVE, HE WOULD HAVE IGNORED IT, RATHER THAN MAKE A FUSS. NOW, DUE TO THE CONTROVERSY, A BOOK THAT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN NOTICED IS GETTING A LOT OF PUBLICITY."